

We claim:

- 1 1. A method of format detection for information having an information rate and
2 received over a communication channel of a communication system, the method
3 comprising the step of:
 - 4 determining the format of the received information from the information rate
5 and a measurement of a time period during which the information was received at a
6 power level that is equal to or above a defined threshold whereby the time period is
7 measured by detecting transitions in the power level of symbols carrying the
8 information.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 where the time period is measured from a sliding window
2 and a ratio of measured average power values for the sliding window.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1 where the communication channel is a guiding channel and
2 the received information is extracted from the guiding channel.
- 1 4. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of providing a lookup table
2 containing a list of M information size values for the guiding channel and lists of M
3 information size values for each of other channels where M is an integer.
- 1 5. The method of claim 4 where the communication system is a 3GPP compliant
2 UMTS communication system.

1 6. The method of claim 4 where the step of determining the format of the received
2 information comprises the steps of:
3 calculating an estimated information size value for information extracted from
4 the guiding channel by multiplying the information rate to the measured time period;
5 selecting at least one information size value candidate from the list of M
6 information size values for the guiding channel based on the calculated estimated
7 information size value; and
8 applying the selected candidates to an algorithm for determining an actual
9 information size value of the information extracted from the guiding channel when the
10 estimated information size value is not equal to any of the M information size values
11 in the list for the guiding channel.

1 7. The method of claim 6 where the step of calculating an estimated information
2 size value further comprises the step of rounding off the calculated information size
3 value to a nearest integer value.

1 8. The method of claim 6 where the format of the extracted information is determined
2 from the calculated estimate information size value when that value is equal to one of
3 the M information size values in the list for the guiding channel.

1 9. The method of claim 6 where the step of applying the selected candidates to an
2 algorithm for determining an actual information size value comprises the step of:
3 performing an error correcting decode operation on the extracted information
4 that yields a result on which a tail bit test and an error detecting decode operation are
5 performed.